



MIAMI BEACH

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

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LETTER TO COMMISSION

TO: Mayor Matti H. Bower and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jorge M. Gonzalez, City Manager

DATE: January 30, 2008

SUBJECT: Washington Avenue Bridge Closure

On January 14, 2008, the City of Miami Beach (City) was issued a Notice of Bridge Closure letter by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Six Office recommending the immediate closure of the Washington Avenue Bridge to all traffic, due to the intensifying deteriorating structural conditions of the bridge. FDOT is the agency responsible for inspecting and ensuring the safety of all bridges statewide, for both county and local governments.

The City of Miami Beach has a total inventory of forty-three (43) bridges, twenty three (23) of which are City-owned bridges, twelve (12) of which are owned by Miami-Dade County (MDC), and eight (8) of which are owned by FDOT. FDOT inspects all of the bridges on a recurrent basis and the average lapse time between inspections is generally 2 years. However, depending on the observed conditions during the inspection, a bridge may enter into a more periodic inspection program, such as a yearly basis. Along with the Washington Avenue Bridge, there are two (2) City of Miami Beach owned bridges which have also been rated structurally deficient by FDOT at their last inspection. These bridges are as follows:

Table 1. Structurally Deficient City-Owned Bridges in Miami Beach

Bridge	Status
17 th Street Bridge	Declared structurally deficient in 2002. Repairs occurred in 2004, and additional repairs are scheduled for 2008.
Convention Center Bridge	Declared structurally deficient in 2006. Currently being repaired and scheduled for completion by January 31, 2008.
Washington Ave. Bridge	Declared structurally deficient in 2007. Scheduled for repairs in 2008.

The term "Structurally Deficient" means that FDOT believes a bridge should undergo a series of repairs or replacement within the next six (6) years. FDOT's policy is to repair or replace all the structurally deficient state owned bridges during that time. The department also recommends that local governments follow the same schedule for their structurally deficient bridges. To date, the City has been complying with FDOT's recommendations.

The Washington Avenue Bridge had been under a yearly inspection program since 2002. However, the bridge was not declared structurally deficient until late 2007. Based on the November 26, 2007 FDOT Inspection Report and a subsequent Deficiency Alert letter issued by FDOT to the City on December 14, 2007, the City developed an immediate course of action by re-prioritizing the repairs of the Washington Avenue Bridge within its Citywide Bridge Rehabilitation/Maintenance Program and slating the Bridge for repairs in 2008.

Below is a historic outline of the Inspection Findings of the Washington Avenue Bridge since 2002.

Table 2. Washington Avenue Inspection Findings (2002-2007)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Structurally Deficient</u>
2002	No
2003	No
2004	No
2005	No
2006	No
2007	Yes

The above table clearly illustrates that the Washington Avenue Bridge had not been deemed structurally deficient until very recently. It was not until late 2007 that the structure was declared structurally deficient. Note also that both the exponential and rapid decrease during the last two years. Although the exact reasons why this structure experienced such a rapid and exponential deterioration are not fully ascertained at this time, it is evident that years of exposure to the elements, increased traffic volume as well as loading impacts associated to growing construction equipment activity to nearby sites may have had a role in its accelerated deterioration.

Immediately following the 2007 inspection report, FDOT, in a follow-up letter dated January 4, 2008, further advised the City, that the truck traffic weight limits for the bridge would need to be lowered and posted; however, the recommendations of this same letter did allow for vehicles and trucks over the Bridge. In the interest of developing a proactive approach to rehabilitating the Bridge, the City immediately developed a response plan and a course of action. The Bridge Rehabilitation/Maintenance Program Report was revised to make the repairs of the Washington Avenue Bridge a top priority, construction drawings were given to FDOT on January 7, 2008 to assist with the re-rating of the bridge, and City staff began to develop the technical scope of work for repairs as interpreted in the November 2007 inspection report.

Surprisingly, a new communication from FDOT arrived on January 14, 2008 advising the City to immediately close the bridge to all traffic.

Under this new directive, the City has now proceeded to immediately close the Bridge and is presently developing a scope of services to address the repairs under an emergency condition as well as undertake the necessary steps to redirect the traffic in a safe and efficient manner. Information as to the rehabilitation of the Bridge as well as repair timelines and anticipated bridge re-opening will be provided to you in a future LTC. The Public Works Department has coordinated with the City's Public Relations Specialist to ensure the public is kept thoroughly informed.

Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) Plan

The Public Works Department has coordinated with the Police and Fire Departments as well as with the Miami-Dade County Public Works Department and FDOT to develop a MOT Plan.

Miami International Boat Show 2008

The bridge will not be fully restored for the 2008 Miami International Boat Show (Boat Show), which begins staging on February 7, 2008 and opens to the public from February 14-18, 2008. There are impacts to the logistics of the accessibility of staging vehicles for the Boat Show. A MOT plan specific to the Boat Show will be developed by next week.

Should you have any questions do not hesitate to contact me at 305-673-7080.

RCM/FHB/FV/cl